

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/07/2007

SPONSOR Sanchez, M LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Define Highway Safety Corridors SB 575

ANALYST Moser

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT)
 Department of Public Safety
 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 575 amends Section-7-301, NMSA 1978, changing the term “safety zone” to “safety corridor” and defining safety corridor as a highway segment with a five-year history of ten or more fatal or serious injury crashes as evidenced by records of the NMDOT. In addition, the proposed language would require the NMDOT to give notice to the public of the safety corridor designation for ten days before law enforcement may assess double fines for speeding.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Indeterminate

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB 575 amends Section 66-7-301 to change the term “safety zone” to “safety corridor,” and adds a more comprehensive definition of “safety corridor.” The bill also explains the steps the state must take before it can assess double fines for speeding in a safety corridor.

The bill is quite clear and specific; the NMDOT indicates that it must justify the denomination of a segment of highway as a “safety corridor” with evidence of ten or more fatal or serious injury crashes over the previous 5 years. In addition, the new language requires the NMDOT to give notice to the public of the designation (as a safety corridor) for ten days before law enforcement may assess double fines for speeding. The bill uses the words “conspicuous notice,” but allows the NMDOT to decide the form this “conspicuous notice” will take.

The NMDOT indicates a concern that the language the bill uses to establish the five year test period may need clarification. The bill reads: “... a highway segment with a five-year history of ten or more fatal or serious injury crashes...,” but NMDOT notes it does not provide an indication of what event will trigger the 5 year period of evaluation.

Further, the proposed language defines safety corridor as a highway segment which could be interpreted as an entire corridor such as I-40, I-10 from east to west, or I-25 from north to south, thus applying the ten or more crashes to the entire route.

The NMDOT affirms that it currently has internal procedures defining the guidelines for safety corridor designations as required by House Bill 95 which went into effect on May 15, 2002. The guidelines identify the responsible parties and criteria and establish a public awareness campaign. NMDOT state that specifying requirements for designation of safety corridors in the statute does not allow the NMDOT the flexibility to analyze and plan corrective actions for accidents. Instead, it would require the NMDOT to designate the facility a “safety corridor” based on ten or more fatalities or serious crashes.

Finally, The NMDOT indicates that the use of the word “crashes” may be too specific. To encompass all possible causes of fatalities or serious injuries, the NMDOT uses the terms “traffic accidents” or “collisions”.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The NMDOT indicates that it may also use accident or fatality rates to designate or disqualify potential “safety corridors”. These rates are determined based on exposure to risk and identify vehicular and other conflicts that are susceptible to accident occurrences such as volume levels, roadside activity, intersection frequency, degree of access control, alignment, and functional classification as defined by NMDOT safety guidelines.

GM/sb